OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE

OF

AFFAIRS IN IRELAND;

SUGGESTED BY A RECENT REPORT,

THAT THE OFFICE OF

CONCESSION AND PACIFICATION

WAS TO BE ENTRUSTED TO

His Royal Highneſs the Prince of Wales.

" Coeant in fœdera dextræ
" Quâ datur: aſt armis concurrant arma cavete." VIRGIL.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, oppoſite Burlington Houſe, Piccadilly.

1797.

OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c.

A Report has been ſome days in circulation, that His Majeſty, affected in the moſt ſenſible manner by the late ſignal marks of fidelity to his government and attachment to his royal perſon, diſplayed by all orders and deſcriptions of the people of Ireland, had come to the gracious reſolution of removing every juſt cauſe of complaint which may have hitherto exiſted among any part of them, by admitting the Roman Catholics of that kingdom to an equal fellowſhip of rights and privileges with his other ſubjects; and in order to give the greater weight and luſtre to this act of bounty, had ſignified his pleaſure that his eldeſt ſon and the heir apparent of his crown

ſhould be the meſſenger of it to his faithful people.

Whether this report be well founded, I have not the leaſt means of determining. Whether it were not deſirable that it ſhould be ſo, whether ſuch a determination would not reflect the higheſt honour on His Majeſty's councils, as indicating the abandonment of every narrow jealous ſyſtem of policy, and diſplaying a magnanimity and comprehenſive wiſdom ſuitable to the preſent moſt critical conjuncture of public affairs, is a queſtion on which a few obſervations, delivered with due caution and circumſpection, and a juſt regard to the dignity of all perſons concerned, cannot, in any point of view, be deemed improper.

It has happened, agreeably to a very natural, but often a very fatal courſe of things, that a ſpirit of alarm, almoſt univerſally diffuſed, emphatically, if not oſtentatiouſly diſplayed, has by length of time, and, perhaps, the early violence of its exertion, ſubſided into the moſt placid and calm ſecurity, the

moſt ſtoical apathy and indifference. Men who trembled at the arms, and ſtill more at the principles of France, before the former had ſignalized themſelves by the overthrow or humiliation of the moſt powerful ſtates, and the latter acquired a ſecure and firm eſtabliſhment, decorated with all the pomp of military glory, and ſupported by the terror of military ſtrength, act now as if the danger was entirely over, derive ſecurity from all thoſe circumſtances that ſhould increaſe fear, and return to their old habits of political intrigue and cunning with as much compoſure as if the deſtroyer had been entirely diſcomfited, and all means of future annoyance wreſted from his hands. But ſurely, ſurely this is not wiſe. If ever there was cauſe for terror, there is now no reaſon for confidence. If danger, and danger of the moſt portentous magnitude, ever threatened us, it threatens us ſtill. If ever a rare union of wiſdom and virtue was required to avert it, it is required now. Wherein do that wiſdom and virtue conſiſt? This it is not ſo eaſy to ſhew in all its extent. But wherein they do not conſiſt,

it will not be ſo difficult to explain, and is ſufficient for our purpoſe.

Virtue and wiſdom do not conſiſt in keeping up heartburnings and diſcontents, where perfect unanimity and chearful obedience might be eſtabliſhed; or if not perfect unanimity, at leaſt a union ſo general as to exclude every important or dangerous diſſention. There is no wiſdom or virtue in harſhly repulſing a people anxious to gather round the throne of a beloved monarch, and hazard their lives and fortunes in the cauſe of his government. There is no wiſdom in contemptuouſly rejecting their humble ſupplications, in adding to the ſmart of oppreſſion the ſtill more corroding ſmart of bitter ſcorn and reproach. This want of wiſdom and virtue will appear ſtill more glaring, if, in every inſtance, conceſſion has produced enthuſiaſtic loyalty—rejection tried, but not exhauſted patience.

The appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam to the viceroyalty of Ireland, accompanied by the gracious intentions for the fulfil-

ment of which that appointment ſeemed to be a pledge, appears to have immediately aſſuaged the angry paſſions which raged in that diſtracted country. From that day the columns of our papers were no longer filled will narratives of mutually retaliated cruelties. Even the ignorant and barbarous peaſantry ſeem to have felt the impreſſion of gratitude and reſpect which ſo forcibly communicated itſelf to the higher orders of the inhabitants. In proportion as the proſpect of ſeeing the happy work conſummated drew nearer, when the King's intentions were ſolemnly diſcloſed to his Parliament, when a union of parties under the auſpices of His Majeſty's repreſentatives appeared haſtening with joy and gratitude to fulfil, in its full extent, his gracious pleaſure, every unpleaſant ſymptom which had ſtill diſplayed itſelf diſappeared—nothing more favourable than the whole face of the country. Religious zeal was diſarmed of all its malignity, and, except what diſcontent might be ſuppoſed to lurk in the breaſts of a few to whom the materials of ſtriſe and bloodſhed had in all times proved a harveſt of plunder,

one diffuſive ſpirit of glad ſubmiſſion and chearful obedience ſeemed to pervade every rank and order of inhabitants. Parliament was not parſimonious in its grants—and for once, parliamentary liberality was by the people regarded as a virtue. Every deſcription of men offered to arm in defence of the ſtate; and it is probable, that if at that time the enemy had appeared on the coaſt, they would have been met by ſomething, not more meritorious, indeed, but more animated and ſpirited than a ſenſe of duty, magnanimouſly overcoming the temptation of ſuggeſted wrongs—the enthuſiaſm of gratitude among an emancipated and, becauſe emancipated, an united people.

I am not a hired panegyriſt of my Lord Fitzwilliam; I am a perfect ſtranger to his Lordſhip; I am not connected with any party of men in Ireland, though, I confeſs, not without an intereſt in the fortunes of that country; it is therefore, as an impartial obſerver, that I have drawn this picture. They who remember the facts of

thoſe times will ſubſcribe to its truth. They who ſo ſuddenly reverſed it, ought to feel remorſe and ſhame at their guilt.

When every hope vaniſhed; when a faction triumphed, and the great body of the nation was treated with mockery and deriſion; when expectations deliberately raiſed were precipitately diſappointed; when the intentions of the beſt of Sovereigns were fruſtrated by cunning and intrigue; then no wonder many ſigns of diſſatisfaction appeared. Wounds ſo happily cloſed bled afreſh. The peaſantry returned to their former habits of plunder and carnage, when not awed by the conſpiring voice of their ſuperiors. They were not, indeed, abetted or encouraged by any perſon of the moſt ſlender conſideration or fortune; on the contrary, men angrily frowned upon by the countenance of government, frequently joined to ſupport that government in enforcing the laws againſt them: but they who had been egregiouſly bubbled and cruelly uſed, could not but bitterly complain; and the language of

complaint might indirectly promote exceſſes, which none were more forward than the complainers to reprobate and chaſtiſe. Certain it is, the ardour of men, in ſupport of the government, was cooled by their ſtrong and juſt animoſity to the perſons who adminiſtered it. Obedience there was; obedience, which temptation did not ſhake, which danger only animated and enlivened.

But it was obedience merely; it was not that generous, high-ſpirited loyalty, which, by its chearful animated countenance, and the union which it produced, awed the peaſantry into ſubmiſſion, and ſilenced the voice of bold empyrical innovation, and which ſeemed like the auſpicious preſage to ſuch an happy order of things as ſhould force the moſt unwilling to reverence the conſtitution, either by imparting to them a ſenſe of its excellency in the emjoyment of its fruits, or ſtriking them with deſpair of overturning it, by depriving them at once of pretexts and auxiliaries. Indeed, in whatever point of view the enemies of conceſſion

think proper to repreſent the ſtate of Ireland, they will find it difficult to ſupport their oppoſition. If they echo the language of their papers, and celebrate the loyalty of the people as diſplayed on the late memorable occaſion, it will require no inconſiderable logical ingenuity, from premiſes of alledged merit, to infer the concluſion of prolonged unmitigated puniſhment. If they dwell on the outrages which have ſo recently diſgraced, and ſtill continue to diſgrace ſome parts of that diſtracted country; if they ſtill farther inſiſt on the language ſpoken, and the principles broached by certain individuals, and aſſociations of individuals in the North, language and principles but too much tainted with the incorrigible malignity of the Jacobine ſchool; I anſwer, the proſpect of conceſſion put a ſtop to thoſe outrages, and ſilenced the ſpeakers of that language, and the broachers of thoſe principles.

This is not a time to ſport with the feelings of nations: this is not a time to make wanton experiments of their patience. The

experiments may ſucceed. Their patience may not fail us. But patience is not ſufficient. The briſk, active, vigorous cooperation of all parts of the empire is neceſſary to our ſalvation. We are aſſailed by an enemy of unconquerable malignity, untameable perſeverance, inexhauſtible reſources, gathering new ferocity from defeat, new inſolence from ſucceſs. The moſt powerful confederacy ever formed has ſunk before him. The whole fabric of European policy has been disjointed by his overwhelming violence. Neither the gold of Spain, the faſteneſſes of Piedmont, the hardihood and diſcipline of Auſtrian valour, the military renown and ſcience of Pruſſia, have been able to form any barrier againſt his power. Holland, our ancient ally, united to us by the ties of religion and intereſt, is no more. Her territories are embodied with his empire. The remains of her navy, and her long line of coaſt, have become ſubſervient to the purpoſes of his maritime ambition. To us he has ſworn immortal hatred, and the oaths of blood he has ever religiouſly obſerved. Fighting with ſuch

an enemy, fighting not the ſtrife of a day, but, perhaps, a war of years, ſhould it not be the earneſt endeavour of the King's miniſters to animate the hearts of his ſubjects in every part of his widely-extended dominions with a zealous affection for his perſon and government from a ſenſe of the bleſſings they enjoy, and the ſoothing reſpect and confidence with which they are treated? What ſhould we think of a miniſter who ſhould deſcribe the enemy we are combating in terms far more eloquent, certainly not leſs forcible, than what I have uſed, who ſhould declare to us, that every thing dear and valuable was ſtaked on the iſſue of the conteſt, and ſhould nevertheleſs be content to ſacrifice the affections of a whole people, to lay them open to the corruptions of the hoſtile ſtate, to ſubdue their unanimous high-ſpirited loyalty into a tame ſpiritleſs obedience at beſt, and with no very good ſecurity, that even this obedience would laſt—all to gratify an inordinate paſſion for power, to pamper a family or party, and reward their ſubmiſſion to his

will, at the hazard of diſmembering the empire?

I have ſuppoſed the patience of the majority of the people of Ireland would not be exhauſted. Even then would all our foreign operations be encumbered and embarraſſed; the full ſtrength and vigour of the empire would not be able to exert themſelves whilſt allegiance was deprived of its vital principle, its derivation from the heart, and deadened into a cold, ſullen, irkſome duty. But this obedience muſt be extremely precarious. The ſpirit of adventurous innovation is abroad. The firmeſt heads have often felt the poiſon of romantic theory. The principles in vogue have many attractions for our vain preſumptuous nature. A nation adopting theſe principles will not want a powerful auxiliary to ſecond her attempt. It is as much by the influence of thoſe principles taking advantage of every cauſe of diſcontent ſown by the heedleſs miſmanagement of Sovereigns, as by the terror of his arms that our enemy is formidable. He has, by the genius of his

polity, eſtabliſhed a ſolemn league and covenant with all the feveriſh reſtleſs paſſions of the human heart. Wherever there is pride and ambition, he will have partizans. Theſe partizans are active; and who can calculate the effects of their activity on a people prepared by a ſenſe of wrongs and inſults to liſten to their deluſive promiſes?

There is ſomething whimſically abſurd in our obſtinate ſeverity againſt the Roman Catholics of Ireland. When the laws under which they ſuffer were impoſed, the danger which called for precautions, was the danger of a too-rigid adherence to the principle of hereditary ſucceſſion, the danger of exceſſive, though miſplaced, loyalty, the danger of a ſpirit too nearly allied to the genius of deſpotic monarchies. The code of Catholic diſabilities muſt have been grounded on the ſuppoſition, that either from ſomething radical in the tenets or genius of the ſect, or the influence of accidental circumſtances, a connection had been eſtabliſhed between that mode of re-

ligious belief, and the principles on which the exiled family of Stuart was ſupported. Is Jacobitiſm the danger of the preſent day? or is there any analogy or ſimilitude between the Jacobitiſm of our fathers, and the Jacobiniſm of their ſons? Are the ſame ſet of men to be proſcribed as infected with the former at one period, and with the latter at another? Who does not ſee that the very ſame reaſon which gave a colour of juſtice to the laws in queſtion, at their firſt eſtabliſhment, is the ſtrongeſt argument for their preſent repeal, unleſs we are afraid of an overflow of loyalty, or that the Cardinal of York will be the object of it inſtead of our gracious Sovereign?

The genius of perſecution has produced ſome whimſical appearances; it has connected allegiance and rebellion with one or more letters in a word, with green and blue jackets, with metaphyſical jargon equally unintelligible to all parties. But ſhould it ever amalgamate the Roman Catholic religion with the French philoſophy, it will have produced the moſt extraordi-

nary compound of heterogeneous ingredients that ever came out of the elaboratory of political chemiſtry. The moſt rigid, ſevere, and unſociable of all the forms of Chriſtianity, it will have coupled in monſtrous alliance with a ſet of doctrines fanatically hoſtile to all Chriſtianity—a ſyſtem of religious belief which, of all others, was ſuppoſed to be moſt favourable to the rights of ſovereigns, and the pretenſions of the clergy, it will have aſſociated with regicide and ſacrilege, with the declared foes of kings, and the deſtroyers of altars. The perſecutors and perſecuted will join in friendſhip with each other, and the incoherent combinations, ſuppoſed by the critical poet, be no longer regarded as the monſters of a diſtempered fancy.

I have heard ſome Engliſhmen ſpeak contemptuouſly of the ſpirit of the Iriſh: they think ſo long uſed to ſervitude, no injury or inſult will goad them into inſurrection, or that the inſurrection of ſuch a people has nothing formidable to ſuch a power as that of Great Britain. But let

theſe gentlemen reflect, that they are not now in the days of a Burleigh, a Marlborough, or a Chatham, when the counſels of pride were directed by wiſdom, and ſupported by ſucceſsful valour. Every rival ſtood humbled, and ſomething of a domineering, nay, an inſolent ſpirit, was excuſed by the great atchievements which inſpired it. But let us take care that our pride, ſurviving our power, does not expoſe us to the mockery and deriſion which attend arrogance in rags: it has already alienated from us moſt of the nations of the earth; it has eradicated love even from breaſts which could not refuſe us eſteem. Let us take care that it does not provoke inſult, when we may be obliged to ſolicit compaſſion. I ſee nothing in our preſent ſituation which entitles us to hold this high language, or aſſume this lofty brow; or let us be proud where pride has ſomething martial and becoming. Let us retort the defiance of pride to the menaces of our enemies, not repulſe with inſolence the ſupplications of our fellow ſubjects.

I know nothing ſo characteriſtic of a narrow underſtanding and a mean groveling ſpirit; nothing, indeed, ſo alien from the genius of true erect becoming pride, as this ſort of contemptuous flippancy; this loftineſs in words, unſupported by actions; this arrogance to the humble, accompanied by truckling to the proud. The poet of Imperial Rome, when he would inſpire his haughty countrymen with the moſt lofty and heroic ambition, bids them be mild to the lowly, whilſt they are prompt to ſubdue arrogant defiance:

" *Pacique imponere morem,*
" *Parcere ſubjectis & debellare ſuperbos.*"

He judged, agreeably to hiſtory and human nature, that the one diſpoſition is inſeparable from the other. The converſe of this compliment would exactly deſcribe the ſpirit and heroiſm of the perſons I allude to.

I ſhall make but two or three obſervations more on the propriety of conceſſion.

It is ſaid the Roman Catholics have already obtained ſo much, that very little remains to be conceded *. If ſo little re-

* This little, as ſome perſons ſtate it nothing, is, however, in my humble judgement, pretty conſiderable. The Roman Catholics are excluded from both Houſes of Parliament, from every dignity or office in the law and ſtate, down to the rank of King's council, and the magiſtracy of ſubſheriffs. Their ambition is likewiſe conſiderably fettered in the army. They are ſubject to certain invidious reſtrictions reſpecting the right of keeping arms. The privilege of voting at pariſh veſtries is expreſsly excepted out of the matters, conceded by the late act of parliament—Vide "Act for the Relief, &c." 33 Geo. 3.

The reader already ſees, that the diſqualifications complained of are not trifling. To paſs a decree of perpetual excluſion from all ſhare in the government of a country on a large majority of the inhabitants; to check and damp, nay, to extinguiſh every ſentiment of generous ambition by the melancholy heart-galling conſideration perpetually interpoſed, that the moſt brilliant talents, the moſt perſevering induſtry, and conſpicuous public virtue, cannot lift up to what noble and magnanimous ſpirits conſider as the only ſuitable fruit and true legitimate recompence of labour and exertion, the confidence of the ſovereign, and the ſplendour of dignity and power which it confers, to pinion all the proud virtues and aſpiring energies of the human ſoul, and condemn them whilſt eager to run out and expatiate in the fields of honeſt glory, either through the imperious dictates of honour and conſcience, to pine and languiſh in an intolerable obſcurity, or ſeek for exertion in vindictive projects of general tumult and convulſion.

mains, why is that little denied? Obſtinately to refuſe a trifle, is, at leaſt, as ungracious as it may be conſidered fooliſh per-

Theſe ſurely are not grievances to be treated with contemptuous flippancy. But ſuppoſe them leſs conſiderable than I have deſcribed them, ſtill the majority of the people of Ireland ſtand ſtigmatized in the eyes of Europe; ſtill are they marked out by harſh ſullen lines of ſeparation from the reſt of their fellow ſubjects. Two diſtinct bodies of men compoſe the nation. The people is not one people; the community is not one community; and that is the ſore point to the feelings of the injured claſs, and to the intereſts of the empire. There can be no cordial union of exertions where there is no coalition of intereſts, no ſympathy of ſentiments, no uniformity of civil and political condition. One part of the nation feels itſelf diſtruſted, hated, and proſcribed; the other exerciſes all the captious vigilance of power, all the petty haraſſing tyranny of conſcious injuſtice. Hence heartburnings and animoſities. Hence ſullen hatred among the higher orders; ſtrife and bloodſhed among the lower. Hence that perpetual conteſt between the government; weak, becauſe oppreſſive; and the people reſtleſs, becauſe oppreſſed. Hence that ferment, that diſtraction, that irregular reluctant obedience, that inefficacy of the civil magiſtracy, thoſe ſcenes of mobbiſh violence and military execution, infallible ſymptoms of a feveriſh diſtempered ſtate of ſociety.

In fine, I preſent to my opponents this dilemma. If the diſqualifications under which the Roman Catholics labour are conſiderable, they are oppreſſive; if trifling, what triflers muſt thoſe governors be who contend with ſuch ungracious obſtinacy about a trifle!

ſeveringly to requeſt it. The ſame argument which arraigns the petitioner of impertinent importunity, convicts the refuſer of churliſh unreaſonable pertinacity.

The Proteſtant aſcendancy will be endangered. Until the meaning of this myſterious phraſe, Proteſtant aſcendancy, is graciouſly communicated to the prophane vulgar, it is not eaſy for the prophane vulgar to argue about it. If by Proteſtant aſcendancy be underſtood the ſecuring the confiſcated eſtates to the preſent proprietors, not to mention the ſolemn renunciation of this antiquated claim by the Roman Catholics, certain it is, that as it could never enliſt any forms of law or conſtitution in its favour, it could be enforced only by the ſtrength of arms—now this expedient is not cut off by the propoſed ſyſtem of ſeverity; on the contrary, pretexts are furniſhed, and provocation given. Will arms be more formidable, when ſtripped of every colour of juſtice, when a few only are intereſted in taking them up, than when the cauſe is common, and the oſtenſible motives ſpecious?

Does the expreſſion, Proteſtant aſcendancy, relate to the privileges of biſhops, and the rights of the eſtabliſhed church? Will theſe be in more danger from the Roman Catholics, who reverence biſhops, and many of whom conſider tythes a divine inſtitution, than from the Preſbyterians and other ſectaries, who are declared foes to the former, and regard the latter as a very inconvenient political eſtabliſhment.

But what prevents the Roman Catholics from ſubverting the eſtabliſhed church at preſent? The power of the Iriſh Proteſtants, aided by the power of England. The gentlemen with whom I am arguing can give me no other anſwer.

The Iriſh Proteſtants, deprived of the aſſiſtance of England, muſt, in a long conteſt, be worſted by the Catholics—ſuch is the inequality of numbers. This, I ſupſuppoſe, my opponents will not be inclined to diſpute, ſince they frequently, in their ſpeeches and writings, hang the fate of the Proteſtant aſcendancy on the connection

with this country. So that the power of England is the main pillar of the Proteſtant aſcendancy. How is this likely to be ſhaken by the admiſſion of Catholics into the parliament of Ireland, and certain dignities and offices in that kingdom? I do not ſee how the ſupplies of our Exchequer would be intercepted, the glory of our flag be tarniſhed, the ſpirit of our ſoldiery be damped, or the ſcience of our commanders be perplexed by ſuch an occurrence. I have not eyes ſharp enough to diſcover the clouds that are to overſhadow the gathered effulgence of ages taking their gloomy progreſs from the Iriſh parliament. I view them coming from a very different quarter, accelerated by cauſes of a very different magnitude; and it is in order to ſtop, if poſſible, their progreſs that I recommend the uniting of every part of the empire in one firm covenant of mutual attachment and zeal, as among the moſt likely expedients to accompliſh ſo deſirable an end.

I come now to the ſecond queſtion, Would the Prince of Wales be the proper

perſon to go over as the meſſenger of conceſſion? I need not dwell on the numerous qualifications and endowments which render his Royal Highneſs peculiarly fit to give every act of grace its due luſtre and value, to augment the gift by the manner of beſtowing it, and in the moſt effectual manner ſecure the gratitude of the receiver, his native affability, unaffected politeneſs, graceful condeſcenſion, dignified eaſe, manners which inſpire confidence, whilſt they command reſpect.

This is praiſe which no one will accuſe of flattery, ſince I only expreſs the feelings of every circle whom his Highneſs honours with his preſence; but leſt malignity impute intereſted motives, even to the language of undeniable truth, I unwillingly quit an inviting ſubject, rather than expoſe the integrity of my page to the ſhadow of ſuſpicion.

There is no doubt but the high rank of ſuch a meſſenger of gladneſs, the ſplendour which would of courſe accompany his ap-

pearance, even the novelty of the circumſtance, would have a tendency to ſoothe the pride, and, by ſoothing the pride, to conciliate the affections of the people. It would be a ſort of pledge that their feelings would no longer be harrowed up by bitter taunts and reproaches, their dignity no longer inſulted by the appointment of inſignificant or worthleſs viceroys, when it ſhould appear that the heir apparent of theſe imperial crowns felt himſelf honoured in being choſen to repreſent his royal father's authority in his faithful kingdom of Ireland, and communicate his gracious diſpoſitions for the gratification of their wiſhes, and the ſecuring of their happineſs.

He is but a ſuperficial obſerver who does not ſee the force of theſe things to gain the minds of men. They operate ſometimes with greater effect than more ſolid benefits. The right uſe of them has given more power to kings and ſtateſmen than they could have derived from the ſtrength of armies, and the treaſures of plundered pro-

vinces.' It was by theſe arts that Lewis the Fourteenth inſpired all orders of his ſubjects with ſuch an enthuſiaſtic attachment to his perſon and government, that he was enabled to perform ſuch great things without overſtraining the ſprings of his adminiſtration, that he was adored by a people whom his vain and reſtleſs ambition was continually haraſſing and impoveriſhing. There is another circumſtance which would render conceſſion peculiarly grateful from ſuch a hand; the high popularity which, from various cauſes, his Royal Highneſs enjoys in this portion of the King's dominions. If in any other part calumny has ſucceeded in miſrepreſenting his character and conduct, ſuch a ſituation would give him an opportunity of redeeming the good opinion of all deſcriptions of his future ſubjects. Who knows, that if any frailties have mingled with his youth, they are not imputable to the want of ſerious occupation, to the jealouſy which deprived him of all public employment, and thus forced an active mind to ſeek for relief in the circle of tumultuous pleaſures. We

have ſeen another illuſtrious perſonage abandon a life of faſhionable diſſipation at the call of his country, mingle in the hardſhips and dangers of war, and at his return give univerſal ſatisfaction in a laborous and extenſive department of government by the moſt minute and ſcrupulous attention to the whole detail of his office, by perſevering ſyſtematic induſtry, by the moſt vigilant and ſagacious inquiries, and the moſt patient affability. What friend to the monarchy is there who would not wiſh to ſee the heir apparent of theſe crowns forming himſelf in the ſame manner to habits of public buſineſs, acquiring the knowledge and virtue neceſſary to a ſovereign at all times, but more particularly in difficult and perilous time like the preſent, and, by recommending himſelf to the eſteem of his fellow-citizens, lay the foundation of their future attachment as his ſubjects? He ſurely deſerves to be conſidered as an enemy to the royal family, and even to the conſtitution of his country, who would expoſe the throne (aſſailed as it is by the open violence of external, and the ſecret machinations of

internal foes) to the poſſible hazard of being ſuddenly filled by a prince, untrained in habits of buſineſs, unaccuſtomed to command, lifted up by a rapid tranſition from the ſituation of a diſtruſted calumniated individual to the arduous duties, and high prerogatives of ſovereignty.

I do not know that a fairer opportunity ever offered itſelf of doing at once an act of gracious popularity, and introducing the heir apparent in the moſt becoming and endearing manner to his future ſubjects, than that which is preſented by the circumſtances of Ireland.

It muſt be a matter of the pureſt ſatisfaction to his royal father, that his ſon and ſucceſſor ſhould appear in his firſt exerciſe of the powers of government, the diſpenſer of bounty, and the meſſenger of gladneſs.

It is impoſſible that thoſe ſentiments of ſuſpicion and diſtruſt, which ſome perſons are ſo aſſiduouſly labouring to infuſe, ſhould ever find admiſſion into his breaſt, at a time

when the royal family, in all its branches, has but one intereſt, though unfortunately a great variety of enemies.

It is ſaid the Prince of Wales will become too powerful. What power will he poſſeſs which is not delegated, precarious, ceaſing with the performance of the ſervice for which it was entruſted?

Will it be ſaid, that the authority of the Sovereign is diminiſhed, when his ſon and heir apparent ſhares in his popularity?

Theſe pitiful Machiavelian politics are juſt fitted to aggrandize an individual, and ruin an empire. They derive their black ſource from ſome of the worſt paſſions of our nature; they are utterly regardleſs of the public good; they have no horizon but the circle of a day; the moſt tremendous conjunctures ſee them purſuing their narrow, buſy, intricate, ſubterraneous courſe, in the ſame manner as the moſt ſecure and peaceful times—in their balance of good and evil, the ſneaking out of a dif-

ficulty, or the gaining of a petty triumph, is an object for which the happineſs of a whole nation may be ſacrificed, and the fortunes of an empire put to the hazard.

We need only look into our hiſtory, and we ſhall find it was the uſual practice of paſt times to delegate the vice-royalty of dependent provinces to members of the royal family to the heirs apparent of the crown *.

* Every reader, at all converſant with our annals, muſt remember the diſtinguiſhed glory and ſucceſs with which a Prince of Wales governed the provinces of France, ſubject to our crown, during the reign of Edward the Third. A Duke of Bedford, uncle and heir preſumptive of the reigning monarch, exerciſed the ſame high commiſſion at a ſubſequent period with leſs ſplendid fortune, but with no leſs courage, prudence, fidelity, and conſtancy. James Duke of York, brother and heir to Charles the Second, was entruſted with the government of Scotland, not yet incorporated with the dominions of England, in times of ſuſpicion and jealouſy, of violence and faction, and exerciſed it for the ſpace of five years, if not with perfect lenity and moderation towards the ſubject, with unimpeachable fidelity towards the Sovereign. To come to the inſtance before us, the caſe of Ireland: No leſs than thirteen Princes of the blood royal of England, and among theſe, ſeven ſons of the reigning monarchs, three of them being eldeſt born and heirs apparent, have been at different periods inveſted with the actual

Among the variety of rebellions which have ſhaken our domination in Ireland, we find none excited by the children of our Sovereigns. It would be a deſperate game,

of honorary vice-royalty of this kingdom. If the practice has been diſcontinued of latter times, it has not been owing to any eſtabliſhed principle of policy, whether wiſe or unwiſe, as is ſufficiently apparent from the inſtance already mentioned of James Duke of York, in the reign of Charles the Second; but in every caſe, except one, the reaſon is obvious, ariſing either from defect of objects, or as in the inſtance of two late reigns from the political circumſtances of the period which begot unfortunate animoſities in the boſom of the royal family.

Soon after the conqueſt or annexation of Ireland to the Engliſh crown, we find at two different periods, John Earl of Morton, afterwards King, Lord Lieutenant and Governor. It would ſwell this note to an exorbitant ſize to enumerate all the princes of the royal family, to whom this truſt was committed. I ſhall content myſelf, therefore, with mentioning the heirs apparent and preſumptive.

In the reign of Henry III. A. D. 1252, Edward, eldeſt ſon to the King.

Reign of Edward IV. 1462. George Duke of Clarence, for ſeven years. At that time, the King, if I am not miſtaken, had no legitimate iſſue. George Duke of Clarence, therefore, was preſumptive heir to the Crown. Theſe were times of jealouſy and faction. The caſe therefore deſerves attention.

Reign of Richard III. 1483, Edward, ſon to the King. He was an infant. Accordingly we find the commiſſion was

indeed, to ſtake the ſucceſſion of three crowns againſt the uncertain and precarious poſſeſſion of one.

only honorary; and there was a Deputy Lieutenant to execute the office.

Henry VII. 1494, again from 1498 to 1503, Henry Duke of York, afterwards Henry VIII. In 1502 Henry became, by the deceaſe of his brother Prince Arthur, eldeſt ſon of England, and heir apparent of the Crown: Arthur dying in the beginning of April of that year.

This caſe deſerves to be noticed, as Henry VII. was not only a moſt wiſe and vigilant prince, but eminently jealous of his authority, and diſpoſed to regard his children with an eye of political ſuſpicion, as, indeed, he had ſome reaſon, the Crown, according to every rule of conſtitutional law, devolving to his eldeſt ſon on the death of his Queen, in whom alone reſided the title of blood, as ſole remaining repreſentative of that elder branch of the royal houſe of England, the houſe of York.

From that period to the preſent we do not find any ſon of England repreſenting the royal authority in Ireland. But, excepting the reigns of James I. George I. and George II. there has been no time in which there was a ſon of the reigning Monarch old enough to be inveſted with ſuch a truſt; and, indeed, with a ſecond exception of Henry VIII. and Charles I. our Sovereigns have had no offſpring of their bodies at all. No argument, I ſhould think, can ariſe from the omiſſion of one reign. George I. and II., it is but too freſh in the recollection of men, lived in open hoſtility with their eldeſt ſons and heirs apparent; and theſe two reigns are juſt as valid to eſtabliſh, in the way of precedents, the expediency of ſuch unnatural diviſions, as to prove a rule of

But, in truth, theſe affected ſuggeſtions of fear do not deſerve a ſerious anſwer: the real alarm is not that the power of the Sovereign will be ſhaken, or the luſtre of his throne eclipſed, but the Prince eſcape from the vaſſalage and dependency in which ſome perſons find it their intereſt to retain him.

It is ſaid, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ought to be reſponſible. Will not the adviſers and counſellors of the Prince be reſponſible? Alas! this reſponſibility, how convenient in argument! how ſeldom re-

policy which excludes Princes of Wales from the vice-royalty of Ireland.

I am not for ſhaking eſtabliſhed rules, either of policy or juſtice, though, no doubt, extraordinary conjunctures juſtify exceptions; and this plea might avail in the preſent caſe. But if the detail with which I have troubled the reader has been accurately deduced, (and I refer to all our hiſtories for the proofs,) it is ſufficient to ſhew that the rule of policy contended for is not drawn out of the archives of a venerable antiquity, has no foundation in the practice of ſound and approved times, but is a mere pretext contrived for the purpoſes of the preſent day, the miſbegotten offſpring of dark intrigue and criminal ambition, to be ſtifled with the parents that gave it birth.

ſorted to in practice! What a figure it makes in a pamphlet or debate! how ſlender its influence on the actions of public men! But whatever there be in it, it exiſts in the preſent caſe; ſo that this pretext will not anſwer its purpoſe.

The argument of expence has been urged with all the mimicked gravity of primitive economy upon this occaſion. The Prince of Wales, it has been repreſented, could not proceed upon ſo important a miſſion, without ſuch a retinue and eſtabliſhment as ſhould be ſuitable to his rank of heir apparent, and the dignity of the ſervice on which he was employed. This, it is contended, would lead to an exorbitant expence, ſuch as the empire cannot well ſupply in its preſent financial embarraſſments. Truely this is very pretty, and very edifying. From the tone of ſevere public virtue and rigorous moroſe parſimony, which cer tainperſons can ſo conveniently aſſume, a man would be led to think that the hiſtory of paſt profuſion was no more than a terrifying dream, ſuggeſted for our inſtruction

and admonition, or an ingenious moral tale, in which a bold and luxuriant imagination wantoned on the detail of laviſhed treaſure, which marks a corrupt and declining ſtate. We are tempted to fancy ourſelves carried back to the days of our frugal anceſtors, in which the expences of the empire were reckoned by thouſands inſtead of millions, and picture to ourſelves a Sully, or a Burleigh, ſeated at the head of our treaſury inſtead of Mr. Pitt. But as unfortunately hiſtory is hiſtory, and facts are facts, we cannot help wondering by what ſtrange fatality it happens that the ſpirit of economy, which can indulge itſelf in ſuch ſweet and profound ſlumbers on other occaſions, ſhould uniformly be rouſed into the moſt fretful alertneſs and reſtleſs activity at the name of the Prince of Wales; that our ſublime ſtateſmen, who are much above the littleneſs of ſcrupulous parſimony in their intercourſe with their allies abroad, or their ſtill more hungry allies at home, ſhould be thus faſtidiouſly delicate and captiouſly minute about expence when the heir apparent is to be honoured, the diſcon-

tents of a whole people to be appeaſed, poſſibly a foreign and civil war at our very door to be averted. And what, after all, will be the probable amount of this expence ſo pathetically deprecated?

Let it be remembered, it is not neceſſary that the Prince of Wales ſhould remain as permanent viceroy, but merely execute a particular commiſſion, as limited in point of time, as it is delicate and important in reſpect of its object. His reſidence in Ireland would, probably, not extend beyond three months. Without attempting the nicety of more or leſs, a hundred thouſand pounds may be ſtated, on a rough calculation, as the utmoſt latitude of the propoſed expence, over and above the ordinary charges. Is this too much to gain a people, embodied into the empire, ſeated on our ſkirts, ſeparated from us only by a narrow ſea, whoſe enmity may prove fatal to us in our preſent difficulties, as from their friendſhip we may derive the moſt ſolid and ſubſtantial relief; when diſtant alliances of equivocal benefit are purchaſed at millions of expence; when

there is not a petty deſpot in Germany, whoſe coffers do not overflow with our treaſures; when, from the treachery of Pruſſia to the imbecility of Sardinia, every thing has been taken into pay; when our profuſion penetrates even into the deſerts of Ruſſia, and rouſes to blood and ſlaughter the ſavages of the frozen Pole. Had Miniſters been as frugal as they have been extravagant, had they merited a ſerious anſwer to their argument of expence by a conſiſtency of economy in the other departments of government, I ſhould put them in mind of Mr. Burke's moſt juſt and philoſophical diſtinction between economy and parſimony. I ſhould repreſent to them, that as the latter is ſeldom more than niggardly ſaving, the former often appears in generous and munificent expenditure. I ſhould urge, that even on the narrow ſtandard of parſimony itſelf, the expence of keeping up a large army in Ireland frequently under arms and in actual ſervice againſt the diſaffected and rebellious peaſantry, the expence of providing againſt threatened invaſion, which relies on internal

diſcontent as its principal auxiliary, not to mention the exorbitant, the countleſs expences which would be incurred, if the preſent criſis of that country were to diſcloſe itſelf in all the tremendous conſequences with which it ſeems pregnant; that theſe far more than countervail the expence which would attend the appointment of the Prince of Wales; that this meaſure would probably produce ſuch a ſaving and reduction in all the former branches as would ſink the latter into a comparative trifle; ſo that on a mere commercial balance of profit and loſs, on a calculation fitted to the underſtanding of the moſt jejune ſubaltern financier, on rules of political economy, drawn entirely from Cocker's Arithmetic, the appointment of the Prince of Wales would be rather a ſaving than an expence; an act of parſimony, not a diſplay of profuſion.

But the argument being of ſuch a kind, and coming from ſuch a quarter, I think I have already ſaid too much upon it. The

illiberal topic filled me with diſguſt, and I quit it with pleaſure.

To ſum up the particulars of this momentous diſcuſſion, it is the opinion of perſons the moſt likely to exerciſe an incorrupt judgement, and poſſeſſing the beſt means of local information, that things in Ireland are come to that point as to admit of no delay. The proſpect every day aſſumes a more terrible and portentous gloom. Letters from all parts deſcribe, in the moſt deſponding terms, the anxiety of the good, the hopes of the bad, the mute ſullen diſcontent which pervades all orders of the ſociety. The outrages of the peaſants, and the horrors of military execution, have recommenced in the North. But theſe are not the ſymptoms which, to the moſt profound obſervers, inſpire the greateſt alarm. There ſeems to reign, in the largeſt part of the community, that ſort of menacing calm which precedes the tempeſt; that awful ſtillneſs which Tacitus has painted to the life in the firſt book of his

hiſtory: "*Non tumultus, non quies, quale magni metus & magnæ iræ ſilentium eſt.*" It is not peace; it is not war: it is the gloomy ſilence of ſullen terror and rankling reſentment. He ſurely muſt have firm nerves, he muſt have a heart compoſed of ſtern materials, who, contemplating ſuch a ſcene, looking forward to the poſſible conſequences in the preſent ferment of men's minds, in the preſent afflicted condition of the empire, while ſo many awful monuments of the viciſſitudes of human affairs lie ſcattered round him, is not induced to pauſe on the brink of the precipice, to ſacrifice his paſſions to his duty, and, inſtead of irritating the evil, labour to ſoothe and aſſuage it. The voice of the public has pointed out the method in which this deſirable end can be moſt effectually and becomingly accompliſhed: it is a method eaſy in the operation, certain of ſucceſs, called for by the patient, attended by no probable danger. Shall it not, then, be adopted? Shall it be ſaid, to the diſgrace of the preſent times, that, under the preſſure of a conjuncture the moſt awful that

ever hung over the fortunes of an empire; when all orders of men feel, or affect to feel, the imminency of the danger, and the neceſſity of every exertion of public ſpirit to avert it, the little paſſions ſtill triumphed over the great, the job and the intrigue went on with unabated perſeverance, and patriotiſm ſerved only to round a period, or trick out a peroration. Such infatuation of profligacy would be equalled only by thoſe ſublime deſperadoes who are ſaid to plunder carcaſſes under the breath of peſtilence, and pick pockets in the midſt of an earthquake. Let us, then, hope that more generous ſentiments will animate our ſtateſmen, that they will give up the game of petty ambition to the awful dangers of their country; or, if this be too much to expect of the public ſpirit of theſe days, that they will, at leaſt, defer it to a more convenient ſeaſon, and not exhibit the indecent ſpectacle to the world of intriguing miniſters, and a tottering empire. This ſurely is not too ſanguine a hope to cheriſh of the unrivalled orator who preſides over thoſe councils which his immortal father directed during

the moſt brilliant period of our annals. As ſome of his colleagues ſeem to think public virtue merely an amuſing ſubject of declamation to a ſchool boy, and a ſpecious decoy to romantic fancies, I will not pay them ſo unacceptable a compliment as to ſuppoſe they poſſeſs any. But to the ſon of Lord Chatham, I may addreſs myſelf in the words of Cicero: "*Reſpice, quæſo aliquando rempublicam: quibus ortus ſis, non quibus cum vivas conſidera.*" Let him not ſink to the level of his preſent company; let him riſe to the altitude of his father's glory. This he can do only on the wings of a generous and aſpiring virtue. The conjuncture requires great abilities: it requires more; it requires a ſoul unwarped by little views—comprehenſive like the intereſts which are to be protected—magnanimous like the ſpirits of thoſe heroes who founded or retrieved the fortunes of empires. In ſuch times cunning is its own bubble; intrigue defeats itſelf. The petty object for which the pilot ſteers among ſands and ſhallows is loſt in the general ſhipwreck, and the pilot himſelf is drowned.

Mr. Pitt is certainly not of that order of ſouls, whoſe native habitual narrowneſs no conjuncture can expand, whoſe coarſe blunt obſtinate cunning no argument can tempt out of the gloomy, puzzling maze in which they love to grope. His mind is intimately converſant with the elegancies of antient and modern literature. He has drunk deeply at the ſources of polite and liberal erudition. His eloquence flows like a rich majeſtic river, into which a thouſand ſtreams have poured their tributary waters. Gifted with ſuch endowments, adorned with ſuch accompliſhments, trained up in ſuch ſtudies, imbued with ſuch a taſte, his whole character and conduct ſhould reliſh of the inſtitutions by which he was formed, and the perfections which they have conferred. The ſchool ſhould appear in the ſtyle of the maſter. It is not allowed to him to be mean, little, and groveling. Wiſdom and virtue have undeniable claims upon him from the blood which flows in his veins, and the gifts which the propitious gods have poured out upon him. Let him, then, riſe to the dig-

nity and pre-eminence for which he is deſigned. Let him at length taſte and dwell on the reliſh of true ambition. Let him feel, let him indulge thoſe lofty aſpirings which are ſuitable to ſuch natures. The circle of a ſingle life, of an age, is too confined an horizon for a ſoul like his. Let him embrace and graſp the moſt diſtant poſterity in one cloſe ſyſtem of ſublime benevolence. The remote deſcendants of generations yet unborn, ſhall unite his name to thoſe of the heroic ſaviours of nations, and the god-like benefactors of mankind. But if he is determined never to enter on this courſe, which ſound well-judged ſelf-intereſt points out—if he is to exhibit a freſh inſtance of brilliant endowments wantonly abuſed, and talents which ſhould have ſaved a ſtate perverted to its deſtruction;—may that deſtruction, which he would contrive for us all, fall ſingly on his own head, and they who might have been tempted to iniquity by his proſperity be warned and deterred by his puniſhment.

I cannot cloſe theſe obſervations without

ſuppoſing a poſſible caſe—that the mild influence of conceſſion may not produce its complete effect, and that there ſhall be found hearts ſo rebellious to kindneſs as to require the terrors of military juſtice to ſubdue them. I truſt and believe that this is a mere imaginary ſuppoſition. There is a nobleman born in the country, which is the ſcene of theſe unhappy troubles, united to it by the affections of his heart as much as by the ties of birth and fortune, adored in return by his grateful countrymen, educated in camps, and tried in the fields of danger and glory, poſſeſſed of every ſoldier-like talent and virtue, ſoftened by the mild graces and accompliſhments of the gentleman, a heart on which proud honour is ſeated, a brow ever relaxed by the ſmiles of affability, as eloquent in the ſenate as intrepid in the battle; this nobleman, to whom the anxious eyes of his country would be turned in ſuch a conjuncture, would, no doubt, be choſen to execute the delicate function of diſtinguiſhing between the deceivers and the deceived, the incorrigibly rebellious and ſuch miſguided perſons

as, to be corrected, want only to be enlightened.

Were he entruſted with the command of the army at the time I am writing, it is probable, from the rare union of moderation and ſeaſonable ſeverity which marks his character, and the dominion which he is born to exerciſe over the affections and diſpoſitions of men, that peace and harmony would ſoon be reſtored to countries from which they have been long baniſhed, and a brave ſoldiery no longer employed in inglorious dangers and civil bloodſhed.

It is not, indeed, a circumſtance to be omitted in enumerating the benefits which may be expected to reſult from the appointment of the Prince of Wales to the office of conciliation and peace, that the people of Ireland will have the advantage of the counſels of this their illuſtrious countryman, a devoted friend, an able and upright adviſer to his Royal Highneſs. A counſellor of ſuch a character will not forget the intereſts of his Sovereign; he will

at the ſame time conſider them as inſeparable from thoſe of his people. He will ſubdue with ſeverity, which will vindicate itſelf from the imputation of cruelty, the obſtinate and untractable; and even the people prone to mercy will applaud the act of juſtice. He will apply every ſoothing conciliating art to allay the heat of minds that have been ſorely irritated; to reclaim the miſguided, and diſabuſe the deluded. He will be rewarded in the manner the moſt grateful to his pure and humane feelings, by the bleſſings of thoſe whom he has reſtored to happineſs and the ſtate.

FINIS.